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GMX LOU001

LITURGY AND THE PUBLIC SQUARE

From inauthentic worship to credible witness

MA mini-thesis

Christian Studies

Prof J. W. de Gruchy

A word of thanks

Thank you to Prof John de Gruchy who inspired me, especially through the two semester courses *Christianity, art and transformation* and *Christianity and art in Africa*, which he taught with the assistance of Robert Steiner.

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Thank you to my parents, to whom I also dedicate this thesis, for the time I could spend in their home, for the faith I could learn from them and for giving me the space to do with this faith the only thing I can.

- Laurie

"Maybe the great challenge is to trust so much in God's love that I don't have to be afraid to enter fully into the secular world and speak there about faith, hope and love. Maybe the distinction between secular and sacred can be bridged when they have both been identified as aspects of every person's experience of being human. Maybe the place where the gap has to be bridged is within me."

Henri Nouwen

"(The church) must descend into the hell of this world, into communion with the misery, injustice, struggles and hopes of the wretched of the earth - for 'of such is the kingdom of heaven'

Gustavo Gutiérrez

"Gee ons, Here, 'n visie van 'n wereld onder U liefde.

'n Wereld waar mense sensitief is vir mekaar.

'n Wereld waar ons mekaar se nood herken.

'n Wereld waar ons vir ander sorg.

'n Wereld waar rykes gee en armes nie uitgebuit word nie.

'n Wereld van respek en liefde tussen verskillende groepe, rasse en kulture.

'n Wereld waar vrede gebou word met geregtigheid en die reg met liefde geskied.

En gee ons, O God, die krag en inspirasie om hierdie wereld te help bou, deur Jesus Christus ons Here. AMEN.

Abstract

Through a literature study into the historic-philosophical roots of what John de Gruchy calls the privatisation of piety, the origins of this privatised faith to Enlightenment thinking and the individualism and secularism that came along with it are traced. Indications are found that, especially during the later phases of apartheid, the value-free mentality that accompanies modernism provided the breeding ground for a status quo religion. What Willie Jonker calls the Second Enlightenment, along with the influence of the Second World War, were further precipitated in the formation of apartheid policy.

A return to mystery as a response to the dilemma modernism caused is argued, in the context of post-modern Dutch Reformed youths that are disillusioned by the church. Their disillusionment has to do with the inauthenticity of their faith in a time of human rights violations. The focus is on the hope that is of key importance in post-modern times, but also forges a relationship between post-modernists and the poor.

The search is for a new spirituality that may connect these young people with the credible witness brought about by a social concern - a contextual and engaging (secular) spirituality. The middle ages could provide answers - examples of such engaging spiritualities and forms of worship as found in the Orthodox liturgy after the liturgy are studied. Ideas communication theory offers are reflected on, using ritual, symbol and story in an appeal for the development of more authentic forms of worship – worship that is for the sake of the other and help in the formation of credible witnesses.

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1. Preface

The subject choice of this thesis already reveals something about where its author comes from. So does the understanding of many of the concepts used. The mere fact that I am interested in this subject and think that it might have some significance for somebody, even if it is only me, says a lot about where I come from and what determined my context.

To clarify the background against which this should be read – who am I? I am a Christian coming from the Protestant tradition in general and more specifically from the reformed Calvinist section. I was brought up in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), went to seminary at Stellenbosch University and am still a minister of this church, although I ministered for four years in a Presbyterian congregation in Guguletu.

My affinities lie more closely to the ecumenical movement than to the evangelical side, if you wish to make that distinction. I am furthermore an Afrikaner and have therefore, along with my Dutch Reformed heritage, a rather intimate and sometimes uncomfortable linkage to the past of this country. It is with this past and the inheritance of the legacy thereof, that I attempt to deal in this thesis.

But I am also a child of my time and therefore a child of what loosely may be called post-modernism. There is more than one variant of post-modernism, so we should perhaps rather speak of post-modernisms today. The post-modernism to which I refer characterizes young white post-DRC Afrikaners. I elaborate a bit further on why I refer

to them as post-modern. Post-christian I wouldn't necessarily call them, but "post" the church, definitely. In a post-apartheid South Africa they are disillusioned with the church and particularly with the DRC. But can they still reclaim faith for themselves? And how can the church regain its credibility for them? Those are the questions that I wrestle with here, attempting to re-interpret Moltmann's question (2000, 172) about the possibility for the existence of God after Auschwitz, of theology after Auschwitz, for the South African post-apartheid situation.

Being a child of my time, living in the third millennium after Christ and defining it in these terms, irrevocably loving the world God created, I also believe that I have a calling to make the gospel of Christ speak in this world, in this context and to these people. These people are to a great extent similar to me. These people also need to understand what the gospel means in their time and find an answer to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's question: "Who is Jesus Christ for us today?" (Bethge 1975, 27) Who is He in our circumstances?

This is my context. This is who I am. I believe we have unique challenges in this country. I believe that I, as an Afrikaner, am called to this continent for a reason. Not to convert it, but rather to serve it as a responsible citizen, and perhaps more so, as a credible witness.

The style that I have adopted reflects my particular way of expression to get at truth in the most provocative way. I recognize that this is not the usual academic style, yet it conveys the passion and urgency of the issues to be explored, to my best ability.

My story is incomplete without saying that I am a South African and an African. I believe my destiny, like that of my ancestors, is bound to the soil of the African continent and with the destiny of its people.

"I am an African. I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land" (Mbeki 1996, 5).

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2. Defining the problem and clarifying key concepts

In the South Africa of the third millennium, we as Christians and as the church in particular are once again in danger of the privatisation of piety (De Gruchy 1986a, 43). While many other people may see countless other threats for Christianity and for the church today, it is my assumption that this privatisation is one of the major threats of our time, to escape into an estranging spirituality that does not relate at all to the world we live in, to the land we are called to serve.

This is a spirituality turned inward with the ghetto mentality of self-preservation in mind, rather than any understanding that the church should by definition be, as Bonhoeffer suggested “the Church for others” (Bethge 1975, 13).

It can be argued that many of these other threats are really driving believers into such a privatised faith, but this, to my mind, causes many people to miss the challenge the gospel offers to our time. This is why I have looked at the origins of privatised faith.

Individualism and secularism, being products of the Enlightenment, are among the causes that brought about such a privatisation of piety, as I will seek to indicate. I specifically look at the philosophical background of these phenomena.

Dirkie Smit, in an “article about theological education, sums up modernity in the notions of rationalism (flight from authority), historicism (flight from tradition) and individualism (flight from community)” (Naude 2001, 4). But Smit’s (1994, 15) further remark about the

impact of "South Africa's radical *Absturz* into modernity and the immense problems created by the simultaneous impact of pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity", is of special significance in the light of what I point out later.

Perhaps it is rather what Willie Jonker (1988, 154) refers to as the Second Enlightenment, along with the effect of the Second World War, that was influential in the formation of apartheid policy in South Africa. In looking at two examples, Nazi-Germany and South Africa during apartheid, I attempt to see whether remnants of privatised piety can be picked up, especially during later developments under apartheid, for example.

I particularly have Dutch Reformed young people in mind when I look at what is required to respond to their alienation and disillusionment with the church, and how they can also be engaged in credible witness. This I do by having a look at the needs within post-modern culture and what communication theory tells us about addressing them. I look at examples from which we can learn some important lessons.

As a whole I attempt to respond to Smit's (1997, 14) suggestion that South African ethicists could learn from attempts to bring a conscious ethical element into the Christian liturgy. "It could help ethicists to make their own work more concrete, practical and useful," he says.

Smit asserts that more constructive reflections on the public role and function of Christian worship should be offered, specifically regarding community building, the formation of character and integrity and the development of virtuous people.

M. M. James points out that the church is a mediating institution which is a structure that, in addition to its primary institutional role, stands between the individual in his/her private sphere and the large institutions of the public sphere or, collectively, between the grassroots and bureaucracy (Koegelenberg 1992, 82). The church therefore still has "a modest but important contribution to make", as de Gruchy puts it in another context writing about his Euro-African roots, not only in the formation of virtuous people of character, or in its public advocacy as such, but simply in being a credible institution.

It may be by definition difficult for an institution to be credible, but perhaps along this line indications of what it means to be credible witnesses in our context today can be discerned.

I try to be as practical as possible by offering some guidelines on how to address this danger of a separation between the market place and the church, public life and the liturgy, what goes on inside the church and outside. In the process I plead for a creative interaction between these two "sides" of a concern for evangelisation from the church, but with the current world view in mind, for a mutual influence of each other.

I concentrate mostly on Smit's call for a renewed formation of integrity and credibility within the church, not forgetting its witnessing and missional dimension, and how all this can be attained by means of the liturgy, without abusing it.

This thesis therefore touches on a whole range of different issues, all of which relate to the main concern that I attempt to deal with. This is the relationship between worship and witness. I attempt to understand the connection between worship and witness and why it reinforced an inability within the Dutch Reformed Church to respond to the injustices of apartheid. The issues being raised encompass both ideological developments in Western and Afrikaner society, namely secularisation, individualism and privatisation, and the symbols expressing these problems as within architecture, as well as possible responses to these problems.

It is not my intention to deal at length with all of these symptoms and symbols, but rather to show how they relate to and illustrate the relationship between worship and witness. Inevitably this means that we will be touching on major points of debate and contention in contemporary theology and other disciplines. To enter into all of those will be beyond the scope of what I attempt to do here. Although touching on different issues in different fields of theology and related disciplines, this thesis mainly operates in the field of practical theology.

2.1 Defining liturgy

Two concepts come into play in the title of this thesis. In fact, they are connected in a very intimate way: two concepts that by definition, cannot be connected that easily. But it is precisely the tension that this seemingly incomprehensibility causes that has to be maintained to provide the creative spark for overcoming the situation in which post-modern DRC young people find themselves in. But before we get to the connection, let us look at the concepts - "liturgy" and "public square".

In classical Greek the word "liturgy" means public service, or a service performed by an individual for the benefit of the people (Wolterstorff 1992, 274). While the word was originally used within the public (civic) realm, it was later appropriated "in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, to refer to the kind of service rendered by the priests in the temple" (Wolterstorff 1992, 274). This metaphorical use was continued in the New Testament and "is only a small step to speaking of what transpires in the Christian assemblies as liturgy, or service".

"In ancient Greece," says Jennings (1988, 14), "the citizens were summoned to assemble in order to take action for the defense and welfare of the city as a whole. Only a few of the people were (actually) citizens in this sense. Only a few were sufficiently free from working for the necessities of life to take the responsibility appropriate for the whole city. Women, children, slaves, workers, even artisans, were excluded. Only those who were 'free' from 'having to make a living' were summoned to the assembly". In the

church it is different of course: everyone is included; both slave and free, male and female, Jew and Gentile.

Some (Dawn 1995, 242; Jennings 1988, 146) want to modernise the concept to say "that liturgy originally meant 'action of the people', but Wolterstorff (1992, 274) sticks to the meaning "action for the benefit of the people", the public, and it is in this sense that I shall be using it here. Wolterstorff views liturgy primarily as action (1991, 7), a sequence of things done (1992, 277).

I agree with abovementioned understanding of liturgy as "action for the benefit of the people" because it includes the vertical transcendent dimension of worship more adequately. We should not, through the democratisation of the concept, lose the benefit of also understanding liturgy as a conversation between God and the people.

From the earliest times, "the service had two main parts, the service of the word, consisting of Scripture and a sermon, and the service of the eucharist, with the intercessory prayers forming a bridge between the two" (Wolterstoff 1992, 278). This Wolterstorff calls the enduring structure and he wants to hold on to both these elements of word and sacrament. Within the different traditions, emphasis on either of these two elements, has varied.

From an Orthodox point of view, for example, the liturgy is simply referred to as the eucharist, perhaps revealing something of the importance attached to this meal in more

than one tradition of Christianity. My understanding of liturgy will however encompass the order of worship in all its elements. This is open to new interpretation, new symbols and rituals, as we shall see later, and to new interpretations of old symbols and rituals. Then we may really move forward towards Bria's liturgy after the liturgy (1980, 1996), into the public square, the market place, the streets . . .

2. 2 Defining the public square

Nowadays a lot is being said about the public role of religion (e.g. the RICSA Multi-Event conference in Cape Town, February 1999: Religion in Public Life). Roughly understood it is acknowledged that communities of faith also have an important political role to play. As I will argue later, this political role has sometimes not been acknowledged, but rather ignored, thus playing into the hands of the powers-that-be that had an interest in maintaining the status quo. It is not strictly in this sense, but *also* in the sense of the public role of religion, that I have the public square in mind.

I chose the term "public square" for its creative possibilities. But the Afrikaans word *markplein*, which translates directly into market place, expresses perhaps even more my intentions.

When I think of this concept, it is as if a vision, an image comes to mind. Greenmarket Square, with the vibrancy one experiences when walking in this cosmopolitan part of Cape Town caused by the intermingling of various cultures. People from all over Africa coming together, celebrating diversity, liberating culture as Dargie calls it (1989, 68).

I open my senses to the flowing together of the deep rhythm of African music, rich colours of fabric coming from all over the continent, all forms of wooden artworks with or without religious significance representing their creator's deepest longings and aspirations. It is so vividly real – the people of this whole continent in interaction with the colonial buildings around the square and the Central Methodist Mission . . .

The Methodist church on Greenmarket Square - the church shadowing the square or being shadowed by the square; this is the most concrete externalisation of the church and all it should represent there in the midst of the people. I have argued somewhere else (1999, 10) that the architecture of church buildings has some symbolic significance for the understanding of that church, or in the eyes of society, for the church at large.

But does what takes place within that church have any significance for society? Does the church impact at all on its immediate surroundings or not?

In this I do not only see the role of the church as a community for the formation of character as is predominant in the debate about values, but I am interested, quite literally, in the interaction between the inside and the outside of the church.

While liturgy can be described as the witnessing practice directed towards the inside of the church, the architecture of the church building, amongst other things, has a dimension directed to the congregation inside the building as well as a witness directed to the outside of the church.

It is this fine line that interests me - this thin wall that divides inside from outside. This wall can sometimes be impenetrable. It can be very far from the inside to the outside of the church, and vice versa. It can be very difficult for people to scale this wall mentally.

But for the church to have a credible witness, to be involved in authentic worship, it needs to exist not only on its own behalf. It also needs to provide windows and doors of opportunity to its members through this wall of separation, to have an impact on reality.

De Gruchy (2000, 12) refers compellingly to the planning and architecture of the old Cape city centre in this regard, with its "imposing buildings". It is in this sense that I will use the concept of the public square, looking at the interface and even possibilities for evangelisation mentioned by some (Wolterstorff 1991, 6 – 21; Stott 1990, 2ff), between the church and the public square, the marketplace - that which takes place inside and that which takes place outside the church building.

David Goldblatt (1998, 16) termed the architectural style of Dutch Reformed churches built in the nineteenth century the "kerkdorp" with its neo-Gothic buildings, the church forming the centre of the town planning. We still have these huge structures confronting people daily with their presence, and that of God.

While there is not much money for or sense in the erection of more church buildings, my concern is how these structures and what they represent could be brought to engage in

their immediate (probably changed) constituencies within the context of the broader challenges the gospel offers us today.

At first it will be necessary to focus on the rift between the liturgy and the public square and its possible origins, which caused worship to become to a great extent inauthentic.

2.3 Approach

After having clarified the basic concepts used and hopefully also shedding more light on my understanding thereof, I will undertake a literature study in chapter three along the lines of the historic-philosophical roots of the “privatisation of piety”, as I specifically locate it in Enlightenment thinking and its exponents. I then have a closer look at the cases of Nazi-Germany and apartheid South Africa and see whether traces of this “privatised piety” cannot be found, at least in variants of them.

In chapter five I look at the possibility of responding, through recovering the lost notion of mystery especially within the Protestant tradition (Everett 1999, 84), to the post-modern appeal for the development of a “new spirituality”. I reflect on the role of the concept of hope, particularly in the South African and African contexts. Then the “medieval point” comes into play and the idea of a “secular spirituality” is further explored along with the fact that this spirituality should be contextual and socially conscious.

I furthermore try to bridge the gap between poverty and post-modernism. As stated earlier, when speaking of post-modernism, I have young Dutch Reformed Afrikaners as exponents thereof in a post-apartheid South Africa, in mind. Dirkie Smit (2001,6) speaks of "a new kind of white Afrikaner" in this regard. The urge of these "liberated Afrikaners" is "for individual survival, the struggle to retain a measure of personal happiness, success and prosperity... interest in privacy and own careers, family, friends and small groups", is what receives attention. This is far removed from the important issues facing South Africa at present, one of the most important being the challenge of poverty. I therefore search for ways to connect the different reality of the poor with that of the disillusioned young Afrikaner.

I specifically focus on the Orthodox notion of "the liturgy after the liturgy" and try to indicate possibilities for the practical implementation thereof through discussing the working of ritual, symbol and story in a post-modern era.

3. Inauthentic worship: The privatisation of piety

3.1 Platonic dualism and pietism

The earliest dualistic split between the body and the soul, between the secular and the sacred, between the mundane and the spiritual, is to be found in Plato's two natures theory. Although this is almost general knowledge, it should perhaps not be accepted only matter-of-factly, as there are also other readings of Plato.

Be that as it may, Augustine was indeed influenced by a neo-platonic understanding of Paul. He reapplied "Paul's grappling with the particular salvation-historical problem of Israel's refusal to embrace Christ in faith . . . to a more general and timeless human problem, that of the individual wrestling with his or her conscience", according to Bosch (1992, 216).

"The human soul is lost, therefore it is the human soul that has to be saved," Augustine argued. "Not the reconciliation of the universe but the redemption of the soul stands for him in the centre," continues Bosch (1992, 216).

Augustine's theology helped a dualistic view of reality to grow – "the tendency to regard salvation as a private matter and to ignore the world" (Bosch 1992, 16).

"The spiritualisation and introversion which began with Augustine (furthermore caused) the cultic-institutional to smother the personal-ethical" (Bosch 1992, 217), since it was the official church which decided between what was right and what was wrong.

"In the process soteriology got divorced from christology and was subordinated to ecclesiology" (Bosch 1992, 217).

A later development that took this Augustinian reapplication of Plato further, is that of Pietism. This "new movement combined the joy of a personal experience of salvation with an eagerness to proclaim the gospel of redemption to all", says Bosch (1992, 252).

"In Pietism the formally correct, cold and cerebral faith of orthodoxy gave way to a warm and devout union with Christ . . . A disciplined life (was preferred) rather than sound doctrine, subjective experience of the individual rather than ecclesiastical authority, practice rather than theory" (Bosch 1992, 252 - 253).

Stott (1990, 2) shows the socially conscious roots of the Revival Movement but states that the "Great Reversal" took place "during the first 30 years of the previous century, and especially during the decade following World War I" (Stott 1990, 6). The reason for this was firstly the evangelical resistance against theological liberalism, which Michael Cassidy (Stott 1990, 6) calls the "Great Betrayal" and secondly the reaction to the "social gospel".

While Pietism was at first understood in a much broader sense, by the third decade of the eighteenth century . . . subtle distinctions were made between the civic and the religious sphere and the missionaries were to concern themselves only with the latter,

says Bosch (1992, 255). This "marked the beginning of the shift from early to later Pietism, with later Pietism's (preference) towards escapism and its construction of an absolute dualism between the sacred and the profane. Undoubtedly the Enlightenment . . . had much to do with this new development."

Rationalism furthermore emptied Pietist faith of its mysteries. Smit and Kritzingler (2001, 3) divide mission enthusiasm in the Dutch Reformed Church into three "waves" and say that the spirituality that carried the first wave and was still operational in the following two, was Andrew Murray's evangelism coupled with German pietism.

3.2 The Enlightenment, individualism and secularism

"While indications that the medieval world and world view were beginning to crumble could be seen as early as the fourteenth century, the 'Modern' or Enlightenment era only began in the seventeenth century" (Bosch 1992, 262).

"Through a series of events – the Renaissance, the Reformation (which destroyed the centuries–old unity and therefore power of the Western church) – the church was gradually eliminated as a factor for validating the structure of society. Validation passed directly from God to the king, and from there to the people" (Bosch 1992, 263).

"During the Age of Reason," Bosch (1992, 263) says, "the power of kings and nobles was also destroyed. And in the Age of Science again, God was largely eliminated from society's validation structure. Human reason and therefore man himself (!) became

central through the empiricism and rationalism of Enlightenment thinking with its human autonomy."

Values, being a matter of choice or opinion, got divorced from facts within this paradigm. "Religion was assigned to this realm of values since it rested on a subjective notion and could not be proved correct. It was (therefore) relegated to the private world of opinion removed from the public world of facts" (Bosch 1992, 266).

"The Enlightenment furthermore regarded people as emancipated, autonomous individuals," Bosch continues (1992, 267). "The individual experienced him- or herself as liberated from the tutelage of God and church."

Bosch (1992, 269) relates different responses from the church and theology to the challenge of the Enlightenment. Firstly Schleiermacher, Pietism, and the evangelical awakenings divorced religion from reason and located it in human feeling and experience.

Secondly religion was privatised. "It would carve out for itself a small domain in public life and for the rest remain a personal matter and leave the 'public square' 'naked'." Amongst other responses, secular society was also embraced and endorsed by theologians like Harvey Cox (1965) in the 1960s.

During the Enlightenment project, little if any "room was left for the element of surprise, for the humanly unpredictable" (Bosch 1992, 271). As already said (Bosch 1992, 266), "facts and values were separated into non-overlapping domains; science and religion were assigned to two different realms".

"In true Platonic fashion supremacy was ascribed to the transcendent, spiritual and eternal reality in contrast with the natural, the tangible and the transitory" (Bosch 1992, 272). "In the process, however, faith and everything related to it became something entirely otherworldly. The kingdom of God in Jesus' ministry was 'purely religious, supernational, future-orientated, predominantly spiritual and inward', it had 'no political, national or earthly design'", says Ohm (1962, 247). Rampant individualism furthermore began to pervade Protestantism in particular.

While Pietism at first resisted the rationalism of the Enlightenment as referred to earlier, it soon realised its only means of survival was "withdrawing into a spiritual cocoon and leaving the 'world' outside the scope of its ministry" (Bosch 1992, 276).

This caused the missionary enterprise to collapse "under the flood-tide of Rationalism", as Bosch (1992, 276) puts it. During the later Wesleyan Great Awakening it was evident that the "secular and spiritual interests had parted company; Methodists were concentrating on the salvation of souls. Societal change was viewed as a result rather than an accompaniment of soul-saving" (Bosch 1992, 278).

In the Second Awakening however, it was not the "official" churches but "those touched by the Awakenings who were moved to compassion by the plight of people exposed to the degrading conditions in slums and prisons, in coal-mining districts, on the American frontiers, in West Indian plantations, and elsewhere" (Bosch 1992, 281). "At the same time these evangelicals had no doubt that soteriological emphasis had to take precedence . . ." (Bosch 1992, 281).

"The Enlightenment had steadily but relentlessly whittled away the once so broad based range of the church's interests in all of life and society." Nineteenth century "Victorian England, however, revealed two 'faces' – a public face which spoke of high moral standards, and a private face where vices of many kinds abounded" (Bosch 1992, 282).

In North America, says Bosch (1992, 284), the "Civil War destroyed the belief that one could be both an evangelist and an abolitionist . . . and define sin as both public (or structural) and private (or individual)," as the Enlightenment caught up with the churches. This caused the development of a rift between a this-worldly social gospel and an evangelical fundamentalism.

Smit and Kritzinger (2001, 5) refer to the deep split between what they call the "evangelising" and "liberal" church members during the first wave of Dutch Reformed mission. They say this fatal and paralysing split is a malaise of Protestantism in general.

Rev. W. Murray's (Smit & Kritzinger 2001, 9) remark in 1857 perhaps sums this up best: "Various outsiders who would not wish to sit at the Communion Table together with a coloured person often do more trouble to inculcate religious principles in that coloured person than the majority of members in other congregations who are indeed liberal enough to sit with them at the Table but are seldom religious enough to make the gospel known to their workers."

In this same year the far reaching decision was taken at a synod meeting in Stellenbosch ("Sodat almal een kan wees...", 1995) that "due to the weakness of some and although our confession of the community of the saints asks of us that we sit together at the table of the Lord, separate communion meetings could be held". What was meant as a transitional temporary measure, became practice. Separate services for white, coloured and black members lead to the establishment of separate churches and would play a significant role in the formation of apartheid.

3.2.1 Philosophical underpinning: Kant to Kierkegaard and Popper

MacIntyre (1981, 38) speaks of the Enlightenment's attempt to discover a rational justification for morality. A central theme in his book is that the breakdown of the attempt for an independent rational justification of morality provides the historical background against which the predicaments of our own culture become intelligible.

"Not only a change of belief represented by the secularisation of Protestantism therefore took place, but also, even for those who believe, a change in the modes of belief and

most of all about the justification of moral belief, occurred", MacIntyre argues (1981, 37). The traditional distinction between the religious and the aesthetic has for example been blurred. "Between 1630 and 1850 'morality' became the name for that particular sphere in which rules of conduct which are neither theological nor legal nor aesthetic are allowed a cultural space of their own," he continues (1981, 38). Morality therefore became radically divorced from other disciplines.

De Gruchy (1999, 17) says "it has been the practice in the West since Immanuel Kant to isolate cultural and aesthetic realms from the worldly domain." In the West, he says (1999, 21), "the link between religion and art has been almost severed".

Smit (2000, 10) following Wannenwetch's very enlightening (!) deconstruction of almost the whole Western theological tradition since the modern time says, with Kant "ethics took the form of the personal, private assumptions, decisions and acts of the universal mass of individuals without identity, that wanted to choose their own lives and determine and forward their own life circumstances, growth, success and happiness".

MacIntyre (1981, 43) refers to Kant as Soren Kierkegaard's immediate ancestor and indicates in both of them how the sphere of morality is sharply distinguished from that of divine morality and commandment. He (1981, 41) furthermore argues that Kierkegaard's appeals to authority in his writings appear to be irrational as the link between reason and authority is broken. This is according to MacIntyre (1981, 42) a further outcome of the Enlightenment project.

"The morality of our predecessor culture – and subsequently of our own," MacIntyre says (1981, 48), "lacked any public, shared rationale or justification. In a world of secular rationality religion could no longer provide such a shared background and foundation for moral discourse and action. Kierkegaardian choice was therefore a surrogate for Kantian reason which was again a reaction to Diderot's and Hume's appeals to desire and the passions."

"This project was bound to fail," says MacIntyre (1981, 50), "because of an ineradicable discrepancy between the shared conception of moral rules and precepts on the one hand, and what was shared in their conception of human nature on the other. The moral scheme that was the historical ancestor to both these conceptions, presupposes a fundamental contrast between man-as-he-happens-to-be and man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realised-his-essential-nature. Ethics," for MacIntyre (1981, 50), "is the science enabling men (sic) to understand how they make the transition from the former state to the latter, how to move from potentiality to action, how to reach our true end."

"When placed within a framework of theistic belief, a concept of sin is added to the Aristotelian concept of error, the law becomes divinely ordained and the true end of man can no longer be completely achieved in this world, but only in another (MacIntyre 1981, 51). All the thinkers of the Enlightenment however rejected any teleological view of human nature, any view of man (sic) as having an essence which defines his (sic) true end."

"While the eighteenth century philosophers attempted to find a rational basis for their moral beliefs in a particular understanding of human nature, they were inheriting a set of moral injunctions on the one hand and a conception of human nature on the other, which had been expressly designed to be discrepant with each other. Moral judgments are linguistic survivals from the practices of classical theism that have lost the context provided by these practices (MacIntyre 1981, 51).

"The secularisation of morality by the Enlightenment had therefore put in question the status of moral judgments as ostensible reports of divine law. The self clearly achieved its proper autonomy and the individual moral agent began to conceive himself and to be conceived of by moral philosophers as sovereign in his moral authority (MacIntyre 1981, 60). The price paid for liberation from what appeared to be the external authority of traditional morality was the loss of any authoritative content from the would-be moral utterances of the newly autonomous agent (MacIntyre 1981, 65)." Why should anyone else listen to him or her anyway?

"The concepts both of value and of facts therefore acquired a new character. The division between fact and value influenced the way in which value and morality came to be reconceived" (MacIntyre 1981, 74)."

Keifert (1992, 31) refers to what Wayne Booth calls the "modern dogma." Reality is shaped into two distinct spheres: the world of "scientific" values and the world of irrational, subjective "Christian" values.

Interestingly enough, noting McIntyre's masculine pronouns which I left intact above, Keifert (1992, 31) says "religion has become women's business, and it secured woman's place in the private and domestic domain all the more. The public rational world belongs to men, and religion is not welcome there."

To generalise about religion here is perhaps a bit dangerous. Judaism and Islam are surely exceptions to this rule being only women's business, although they originated within a different world view that stood in a different relationship to the influence of modernism and secularism. But if it is true what Keifert says about (Western) religion becoming women's business, isn't it all the more ironic that men continued to wield the power even in this sphere?

"For the utilitarian individualist faith, religion and the church are private business," continues Keifert (1992, 27 - 28). "The public space is therefore either empty of meaning and value or becomes profoundly less significant than private space. Modern man (!) continues to live in this fact-value split where facts are what are and values are what ought to be."

Karl Popper, one of the clearest defenders of the split, also underlines what MacIntyre tried to indicate: "It is impossible to derive a sentence stating a norm or a decision from

a sentence stating a fact; this is only another way of saying that it is impossible to derive norms or decisions or proposals from facts" (Popper 1947, 53). "An 'is' can never become an 'ought'."

Facts are the products of reason and observation and are public while values are irrational and belong to the private sphere. This clearly leads to the separation of public space from the private realm. The public is the only place of reason and according to the "modern dogma", "public minds" get separated from "private desires" (Keifert 1992, 33).

3.2.2 Nazism and apartheid: remnants of modernism?

De Gruchy (1986b, 43) says, "particularly since the eighteenth century Enlightenment, Western culture has increasingly cut itself adrift from the Christian tradition". In the process "Western culture has become fragmented and disparate, without a common vision or set of values".

A subsequent "crisis of meaning" occurred in most European societies causing "cynical nihilism, the surrender of hope and therefore moral responsibility. Related to this is a rampant individualism that destroys human community and produces the privatisation of piety that not only undermines Christian community but also Christian witness in society. The church," according to De Gruchy (1986b, 43), "must, in large measure, accept responsibility for this inner, spiritual collapse of European culture which reached its nadir in the rise of Nazism but is omnipresent in secularism".

De Gruchy (1986, 121) continues by saying "the secularisation of European culture, its scientific modernisation, has been an experience of alienation from religious roots and belief in God. This is not a cheap atheism," he says, "but a process of alienation in which estrangement is accepted with profound reluctance; belief would be preferred but not at the cost of honesty and integrity".

"This experience of the absence of God has been aided by false theologies of power and privilege which have supported war, racism and oppression. For this reason many can no longer believe in God. God is dead, and more terrifyingly, our inhumanity towards others has killed him" (De Gruchy 1986, 121)!

Elsewhere De Gruchy (1986a, 103) also refers to how piety has become privatized with "Enlightenment's stress on individual rights and freedom in contrast with the constraints of church tradition and state control". Even the non-conformist piety in nineteenth century England with its social conscience mentioned earlier, "became captive to middle-class interest and . . . turned in on itself".

De Gruchy (1986a, 104) calls this "false piety (which) reduces Christianity to some private sphere of self-interest". He refers to George Kelly saying "convictions which are driven inward - that is, personal convictions that no longer relate to the public sphere - become unfree. Privatised piety . . . having relinquished its prophetic vision and social responsibility, becomes captive to the status quo and creates a vacuum to be filled by

alien ideologies." Such piety conforms "to what is; becomes the handmaiden of patriotic piety, captive to the interest of the nation or the state".

"Historically Afrikaner Calvinism," says De Gruchy (1986a, 105), "true to its Reformed roots, has been anything but a privatised form of piety. It has participated in the shaping of South African society at many levels, not least in the creation and sanctification of apartheid. . . . At the present time (1986) however . . . the demand is for a privatised religion which offers no prophetic challenge and critique . . . For all of (the major churches in South Africa, when true to the tradition in which they stand), Christian faith is personal, but never private.

"It is true of those in the Reformed and Catholic traditions, but also for those, such as the Methodist Church, which are more immediately rooted in the pietist movement of the eighteenth century. There is no doubt however that much popular religion within such churches runs counter to the tradition, and that the churches themselves often buckle under and become captive to such pressure" (De Gruchy 1986a, 105).

This is significant and very true in the case of South Africa under apartheid. But first I want to take a few steps back diverting along an architectural route to further demonstrate the point that I am making regarding the divorce between the social dimension of faith and its mere spiritualization. Mies van der Rohe (Bonta 1979, 27), one of the primary examples of the Modern Movement, said architecture "is the will of an epoch translated into space".

This Modern Movement was, according to Bonta (1979, 27), a revolutionary movement revolting against the status quo of the time, but existed of course under the myth that it was objective and therefore universal.

The Barcelona Pavilion by Van der Rohe for example "symbolised the recuperation of post-(First World)-war Germany, and reflected a political climate in which modern architecture became possible" (Bonta 1997, 140).

Bonta quotes several critics, such as Bier and Tuduri, on the abovementioned building (1979, 156): "Germany was willing to be presented by a building of the New Architecture. Mies van der Rohe's building appears so brave and optimistic about the future ... it won many friends for a new Germany".

And further: "In the German Pavilion architecture ceases to be physical matter and becomes evocation and symbol. This was made clear in the speech of the German *Kommissar* (at the Pavilion's opening): 'We do not want anything more than clarity, simplicity and integrity. This is the quiet home of a peaceful Germany . . .'"

According to Mackay (Bonta 1979, 203) the Pavilion "ended the heroic period in which the architects of the Modern Movement were prepared to stand for social and political ideals". He resented Van der Rohe's increasing political indifference from the time he

designed the Liebknecht-Luxemburg communist monument, until he took a weak stand against the Nazis in 1930.

Miesian architectural space, said Koenig (Bonta 1979, 212), was ideologically neutral. "They were rather symbols of architecture's symbolic nature, than emblems of any other thing extrinsic to architecture itself. His architecture was capable of accepting equally a Communist or a Fascist symbol".

It was perceived to be value-free and could therefore function extremely effectively as a carrier of the status quo, without offering any prophetic critique. Its lack of social conviction, as De Gruchy (1986a, 104) indicated regarding privatized piety, created a "vacuum to be filled by alien ideologies".

Naude (2001, 9), in his survey of the DRC's role in the transition in South Africa (1980 – 1994) concerning academic research, remarks regarding biblical scholarship that it "also became increasingly specialised to the point of sharing in the pathology of modernity (Habermas) where a technocratic or means-end rationality associated with 'objectivity' and 'value neutrality' led to a total separation of the expert and everyday reader of the bible". This value neutrality was completely "oblivious to the political context of interpretation" (Naude 2001, 10).

These biblical scholars were therefore ideologically naive as "the medieval notion of a tropological sense of the bible (also) got lost" (Naude 2001, 10). In this sense they also played into the hands of the status quo.

The photographer David Goldblatt (1998, 17) says the Second World War initially delayed the full impact of the Afrikaner revival from being felt. But the "Afrikaner renaissance" was announced through the "megaphone" of, among other things, the erection of some rather ambitious church buildings. "Vertically bold, often powerfully triangular, they redefined the landscape. If the Gothic churches of the previous generation dominated with some grace, these did so aggressively."

Through, from and in these structures Christian-Nationalism was proclaimed. "The paradox of ultra-conservative religious bodies still imbued with a pre-1789 world view embracing an extremely radical architecture was no paradox. Theirs was a modern message with a radical core: apartheid" (Goldblatt 1998, 17).

Naude says (2001, 6) that Willie Jonker "makes the important observation that the DRC never fully understood the combined effect of the Second World War and the Second Enlightenment as expressed in the critical studies of philosophers like Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas and Marcuse. The abhorrence of nationalism and racism with a radical focus on the social-ethical implications of the Christian faith, exactly at a time when apartheid theology was in the making; and a reliance on earlier, pre-critical European theology at a time when ideology-critique became an indispensable part of

any theoretical construct, delayed the DRC's full confrontation with new European theological trends and led to its almost total ecumenical isolation".

According to Naude (2001, 3) "Kinghorn has argued convincingly that the romantic *volksidee* carried by Warneck's missiology and a specific interpretation of A. Kuyper's neo-Calvinism formed the core of mainstream thinking in the DRC". Willie Jonker (1991, 121) therefore says that his "struggle in the DRC was especially against the DRC as *volkskerk*".

Jaap Durand's view regarding this, says Naude (2001, 8), is that "Afrikaner civil religion was formed and sustained by both Scottish evangelicalism and Kuyperian neo-Calvinism . . . Karl Barth's criticism of religion and natural theology was never really heard or given the opportunity to be heard in those Kuyperian circles that needed it most".

The value of Barth for the DRC, says Naude (2001, 8), "lies in his ability to dismantle the natural elements in neo-Calvinism which provided the theological base for apartheid and expose the anthropocentric tendencies of pietism in its *Gestalt* as inner-focused religion".

The DRC has up to the early 1990s, according to Naude (2001, 8), "not been able to penetrate the very socio-political power base of its own thinking and action", among other reasons because "the identity formation of the DRC *diakonia* (took place) via its

extensive involvement with the 'poor white' problem in the thirties and forties, which created a primary inward-looking focus over many years".

Naude (2001, 5) finds in the rise of the new discipline of congregational studies (*gemeentebou*), an attempt to address the issue of relevance "toward the inside" of the DRC. This is the same point made by Smit (2001, 4) when he says that the DRC was up to now more successful wrestling with the challenges of "modernity" than addressing the issues of church unity and dealing with the apartheid past. From its first phase of individual "*toerusting*" in the early seventies, "congregational studies became the depository for the long evangelical tradition in the DRC" (Naude 2001, 5).

This grew from an American evangelism-in-depth idea, says Naude (2001, 6). "Theologically *gemeentebou* focused on the spiritual renewal and building up of the individual congregant who then reached out to others in a 'person-to-person-action' in the context of a neo-evangelical functional ecclesiology." Some of the initial personalistic views were however later transformed and deepened theologically.

"On the whole," says Naude (2001, 6), "*gemeentebou* has succeeded to at least temporarily stem the impact of certain Enlightenment trends". Naude wonders, however, if it cannot also be seen as a further "act in self-preservation – even as an inward flight to a last safe haven for Afrikaners". I do not here want to go much further in on the extensive issues raised about congregational studies other than using it as a further example of how spirituality in the DRC turned inward.

Apartheid was therefore, in the above mentioned sense, like Nazism, a product of Modernism, and was later coupled with the false piety of spirituality turned inward, which played into the hand of the status quo, and did so with the help of its value-free mentality.

4. Authentic worship: liturgy into the public square

4.1 The notion of hope

Hanekom (1995, 24) speaks of the alienation that individualisation brought. He also refers to the "optimistic humanism" that existed since the Enlightenment, but is currently in question. De Gruchy (1986b, 45) brings another concept in play here – that of hope. This is a very important concept that needs to be explored further and may help us to bind together some of what has already been said and what I furthermore wish to accomplish.

De Gruchy (1986b, 45) says "without the birth of hope there can be no future, but hope is not shallow optimism, it is something born out of the struggle for what is right and just." Elsewhere (1986a, 111), referring to the prayers "of active hope born in the struggle of the rights (of the poor)", he mentions Gustavo Gutiérrez's (1983, 106) call for a "new spirituality, eschewing the escapism of purely formal, superficial prayer and celebration, surging up from the struggles of the poor".

Matthew Lamb (1983, 32) writes in this regard about "the recovery of the Christian spirituality . . . which unites the Mystery of God with the mystery of human personhood . . ." Now enters another category into the debate - that of mystery.

But firstly: the concept of hope. A search for hope amidst cynical nihilism and despair experienced by a lot of especially young white people. This hope is closely connected to meaning amidst post-modern relativism. And perhaps it is important to note that the split between culture and religion has not occurred within African society that intensely.

Why is this so? Is it because Africa is still largely living within a pre-modern world view? Is it because holism is much more part of the African way of life? And what will happen now that South Africa is bombarded with all the influences of modernism and even post-modernism?

In Africa, and in South Africa in particular, the search for hope is related to different issues. For the DRC the search for hope was also on in what they called out as a Year of Hope in 2001. Among white Afrikaners, mainly the DRC's constituency, the search for hope has presumably still got something to do with their loss of control in a new political dispensation. It has to do with adjusting to a black ruled country, to be quite frank. For South Africans in general, the amount of crime, the poverty, the rate of unemployment, the Aids-pandemic and scale of corruption also offer reason for despair.

Russel Botman (2001, 4), quoting Mamphela Ramphele and Francis Wilson in his inaugural address at the theological seminary of the University of Stellenbosch, says “Afro-pessimism” is not only manifested “outside” Africa, but is also present “inside” the continent... “This unprecedented crisis of hope represents the crucial challenge to the Christian mission in the 21st century “ (Botman 2001, 2) .

It is in this regard that Rhampele and Wilson (Botman 2001, 2) conclude that ‘changing the low self-image and *sense of hopelessness* that poor people often have of themselves and their situation’, is crucial to the project of poverty eradication because sustainable livelihood require ‘touchstones of possibility”.

The Consultation of Christian Churches held in 2000 in Cape Town declared “the Church must learn to restore the lost dignity of the poor”. Russel Botman (2000, 6) reiterated at this consultation “that hope is a precondition for sustainable livelihoods, for fighting poverty, for seeking reconciliation and justice, for building stronger families, for standing firm against the scourge of Aids and for pursuing peace in the city”.

It is therefore not only a European, a Western, a post-modern, or Afrikaner search for hope, but also an African and a South African phenomenon. It is significant that the DRC is precisely searching for hope among some of the greatest challenges facing South Africa at present - reconciliation, poverty and moral formation. The Year of Hope—programme can therefore be a way of engaging its members in their call to Africa and South Africa in particular.

References can perhaps be found to a theology of liberation, stressing the importance of poverty as a theological category (Villa-Vicencio 1988, 197). Villa-Vicencio (1988, 190) says the hope of Christian renewal is to be found on the margins of the institutional churches and outside these structures – in the church of the streets. “It is here that a different kind of piety is found, the liberating spirituality of the poor.”

4.2 New spirituality?

Is this what the “new spirituality” is all about? De Gruchy (1986, 34) quotes Galilea noticing “a spiritual awakening, precisely among those Christians who have committed themselves to the cause of liberation... rediscovering the meaning of faith and of prayer and doing so through their very commitment”.

Surely it cannot be argued that there is a “special blessing” in store for those committed to the liberation struggle which excludes those not actively involved in it? There may be something to be said however for the way in which people also become drawn into the spiritual through their social involvement.

I have met Europeans and Americans who were witness to the fact that they experienced spiritual revival through their coming to Africa. During a church service under a tree somewhere in Africa, a Scandinavian radio journalist told me, through the passionate praying and singing, although people were literally dying nearby, he reconsidered the possibility that there may be a God after all. Was this ultimate

escapism that he witnessed, or was it indeed an example of faith that also rejuvenated his own spirituality?

Especially among young DRC members there is a huge alienation from the church, from the DRC in particular, but also from organised religion in general. Although there is of course a great appeal to young people from the side of the charismatic movement, I would argue that the main reason for this estrangement is disillusionment with the DRC's intimate relationship with apartheid. The church is simply not trusted anymore. It became in-credible.

Within a post-modern society, there is however a renewed search for spirituality - a "new spirituality". The reclaiming of faith may therefore be possible through the design of such a new spirituality. But what will the content of this "new spirituality" be?

According to Villa-Vicencio (1988, 192) a spirituality that emerges out of oppression and resistance makes no distinction between what some call the spiritual and secular. "Any attempt to distinguish between faith and justice, spiritual and secular, or for that matter religion and politics, collapses into an organic whole within which the one side of the equation *is* the other" (Villa-Vicencio 1988, 193 - 194).

Villa-Vicencio (1988, 193) calls this form of spirituality "an alternative church to the extent that it seeks its theological centre outside itself." It follows the simple

ecclesiology, informed by a christological relocation orientated around the poor, arguing that “where Christ is, there the body of Christ is required to be”.

Villa-Vicencio should also be read within the context of a 1988-South Africa that was still very much divided between a pro-struggle and a pro-apartheid theology, to put it in very general terms. Is this “liberating ecclesiology” still relevant in post-apartheid South Africa? Poverty is of course, or at least supposedly, still centre stage on the agenda, being perhaps the greatest challenge facing the young democracy. The church should be the herald of the poor and continue to put their case firmly on the agenda. In this regard I believe the Confession of Belhar remains a fundamental challenge to the DRC to determine its priorities for siding with the poor or keep fighting only for the interests of the minority which is traditionally its members. The Confession of Belhar, addressed in 1986 to the DRC after the declaration of a *status confessionis* by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, deals with the issues of unity, peace and justice. But it is probably the most controversial of its statements that sets the agenda for the church in South Africa, namely that declaring God’s preferential option for the poor and calling the church to follow in this regard.

Here we are called to listen to Bonhoeffer’s words as expressed in his prison letters: “The Church is the Church only when it exists for others” (1984, 382). “Without an identification with others to the limit of self-surrender, the (church’s) identity dies,” explains Bethge (1975, 76).

Bonhoeffer comes to this ecclesiological conclusion through his christological understanding of “Jesus as man for others” (Bethge 1975, 149). His emphasis is slightly different from that of Villa-Vicencio when he says “the task of the Church in a non-religious era should be to express the being of Christ in the centre of life, not on its margins” (Bethge 1975, 147). Applying this to the poor, as Villa-Vicencio (1988, 190) did, means bringing the poor in from the margins to the centre of society.

Jennings (1988, 17) says “we too often think of worship as an escape from the harsh realities of the world, as a respite from our labours, as a sacred time and space separated from the real world. In the service of our worship, we (should) model the ways we engage the world in our daily lives.

“Nowhere more than in our liturgy,” he continues (Jennings 1988, 18), “does the language we use seem so distant from the world in which we live – the world of international crises, of economic malaise, of political oppression, of social injustice, of environmental catastrophe, of interpersonal pain. But the meaning of Christian faith is that God has come to the real world and draws us into the real world” (Jennings 1988, 146).

For Bonhoeffer “God and the world are not one and the same thing, but God and worldliness belong together as truly as God is God” (Bethge 1975, 146). Bonhoeffer has therefore “brought the talk about God into the middle of the world and thus placed the Church in her proper context: ‘The real concept of the secular, then – not the

“secularism”, that has so often given the term its negative connotation – has to do with the fact that that which is Christian can be found only in the world”.

Smit and Kritzinger (2001, 12) use the expression coined by Theo Sundermeier, a German missiologist who spent many years in Namibia and South Africa and “understands the mind of Africa”, when he speaks of a church *with* others, rather than a church *for* others. “This implies an inclusive spirituality of *embrace*, rather than of *exclusion*”.

This is definitely an engaging spirituality. A spirituality which does not estrange people from reality, which does not make them escape into a privatized piety. It rather calls them to reality, to face the public issues of the day following Christ’s incarnational model. I would even call this a secular spirituality. I use both the words “reality” and “secular” here in the sense Bonhoeffer used them above referring to “worldliness”, and not, in the case of “secular”, referring to secularism.

I want to coin a term which also connects spirituality in a way with modern pop culture, or at least with post-modern culture. Under this I am not understanding pop spirituality as often expressed in the New Age movement and in the same sense as pop psychology is negatively referred to. This would be superficial.

No, I refer to secular spirituality in the sense of spirituality that is once again connected to the challenging reality poverty offers us in this country. It is therefore a contextual

spirituality, believing rather in contextualization than only in the indigenization of faith. This spirituality takes its context seriously, whether this context may be that of poverty or that being Dutch Reformed post-modern young people.

The secular spirituality I am referring to should be, once more, responsible spirituality. It must not only take its post-modern audience searching for a new identity seriously, but also its broader South African and African contexts. Post-modern culture therefore also needs to be connected to poverty, as mentioned earlier.

One of the major quests for post-modern youth, as I understand them, is a quest for credibility, for genuine people, for sincerity. This is where the natural link lies between post-modernists and the poor within the South African situation, because in South Africa the quest for credibility is very intimately bound up with the plight of the poor.

For witness to be credible in South Africa today, it needs to be involved in addressing poverty. Also for our credibility to be recovered in witnessing to young post-modernists, we need to have credibility regarding our broader South African context and therefore also engage them in a meaningful interaction with the poor. Young people need to recover their connectedness to this continent and to find meaning within the calling to be truly African. With this I mean that they embrace the African part of their identity, if one accepts De Gruchy's (1997,27) notion that most of us are "cultural hybrids". "We need to commit ourselves to Africa", says Field (1998, 56) and we need to realise that meaning in Africa is bound up with the ability to transform despair into hope.

The theological notion of hope may provide a connection between the contexts of post-modernists and of the poor. But I want to dwell a bit further on this new spirituality which has to be nurtured, especially among these young Dutch Reformed “post-modernists” that I have in mind. In this search for a new spirituality it has to be remembered that these young people need to get socially involved. For this they clearly need to be sensitised and exposed as a socially conscious spirituality is being fostered among them.

Smit (2001, 3 - 8) argues quite convincingly – and alarmingly so! – that the DRC is grappling with other issues at the present time. More than the abolishment of apartheid, the flood that he terms modernity, has a far greater effect on the church and its agenda. This is demonstrated by the total lack of interest – especially among the youth – in the issue of church unity in the family and specifically with the Uniting Reformed Church.

A lot of young people cannot remember much about apartheid and, as a matter of fact,

The theological notion of hope may provide a connection between the contexts of post-modernists and of the poor. But I want to dwell a bit further on this new spirituality which has to be nurtured, especially among these young Dutch Reformed “post-modernists” that I have in mind. In this search for a new spirituality it has to be remembered that these young people need to get socially involved. For this they clearly need to be sensitised and exposed as a socially conscious spirituality is being fostered among them.

Smit (2001, 3 - 8) argues quite convincingly – and alarmingly so! – that the DRC is

4.3 The medieval point

How can this sensitised spirituality, this socially conscious spirituality, be nurtured among young people?

Haynes, in seeking to develop an *ethical aesthetics* (De Gruchy 1999, 25), proposes the recovery of the medieval notion of art as a vocation which has both moral and religious significance.

“Both Von Balthasar and Bonhoeffer (also) turned to the Middle Ages as a possible guide to overcoming the problems of modernity,” says De Gruchy (1999, 14). This furthermore “connects with John Milbank’s proposal that in order to overcome the modern predicament without lapsing into resignation, we must ‘consider again the claims of the “gothic vision” in ‘its socialist, Christian variant’”.

“We cannot return to the Middle Ages,” De Gruchy (1999, 14) rightly remarks, “but there is something about its vision, its linking of earth and heaven along with its concern for both beauty and the common good, that resonates with the hopes of post-modern humanity and the promise of the Christian gospel.”

I would have liked him to spell out more clearly what this “something” is that needs to be recovered from the Middle Ages. It could certainly not be its model of theocracy for which there is perhaps a renewed attempt of recovery, in Republican USA for example, though that may be in a much altered state. But perhaps De Gruchy’s hesitance to put

this appeal in words discloses something of its true character. And that is that it cannot be brought under words so easily. It stays elusive, because it has somewhat of a mystical character.

Everett (1999, 84) also makes the “medieval point” when saying “the dazzling splendours of medieval cathedrals, the haunting simplicity of Gregorian chant, and the icons of Orthodoxy can liberate Christians (especially Protestants!) from an often suffocating absorption in didactic literalism and legalism”. Perhaps it is once again the mystical appeal that these Middle Age churches and liturgies had, which has to be reclaimed, especially within the Protestant tradition that overreacted against it.

Smit and Kritzinger (2001, 12) remark that “the Roman Catholic Church is (apparently) far more efficient in motivating its members simply to share their lives with others, to live among them as silent servants and as humble but articulate witnesses to the gospel, when the time is right.

“If the DRC (and the Uniting Reformed Church, etc.) wishes to affirm some form of Reformed identity,” they continue, “we need to find ways of integrating justice and justification by faith, eating together and praying together (referring to the earlier quote), i.e. to practice a world-affirming spirituality, which is so characteristic of the Reformed tradition in its better moments”. Perhaps something of this mystery can furthermore be learned about from the Orthodox tradition, on which I will now focus.

4.3.1 The liturgy after the liturgy

Wannenwetch (Smit 2000, 15) refers to the Orthodox tradition in a very positive way as one of the very few cases where liturgy and ethics are in harmony with each other, since there are no ethicists nor liturgists in Orthodoxy, but only theologians.

Bria (1996, 20), a Romanian Orthodox theologian, writes: "The eucharistic liturgy is not an escape into an inner realm of prayer, a pious turning away from social realities; rather, it calls and sends the faithful to celebrate 'the sacrament of the brother' outside the temple in the public marketplace, where the cries of the poor and marginalized are heard."

Clearer language is hardly possible! This "sacrament of the brother", the spiritual sacrifice, the philanthropy and service which Christians have to offer outside the worship, in public places, is where we "share our food and existence with our neighbour, as we share the same eucharistic bread" (Bria 1996, 25).

"The eucharistic liturgy," according to Bria (1996, 50), "becomes for individuals (sic) not only a missionary event, but a metaphor of human existence and community."

Elsewhere Bria (1980, 215) says "the preparation for Liturgy takes place not only at the personal spiritual level, but also at the level of human historical and natural realities. In preparing for Liturgy, the Christian starts a spiritual journey, which affects everything in

his life: family, properties, authority, position and social relations. It reorientates the direction of his entire human existence towards its sanctification by the Holy Spirit.

"On the other hand, renewed by the Holy Communion and the Holy Spirit, the members of the Church are sent to be authentic testimony to Jesus Christ in the world. The mission of the Church rests upon the radiating and transforming power of the Liturgy. It is a stimulus in sending out the people of God to the world to confess the Gospel and to be involved in man's liberation (Bria 1980, 215).

"Liturgically," Bria (1980, 215) continues, "this continual double movement of thanksgiving is expressed in the ministry of the deacon. On the one hand he brings and offers to the altar the gifts of the people; on the other, he (sic) shares and distributes the Holy Sacraments, which nourish the life of the Christians. Everything is linked with the central action of the Church, which is the Eucharist, and everybody has a diaconal function in reconciling the separated realities."

"The Etchmiadzine consultation states that 'the Church seeks to order the whole life of man by sanctification of the time, by the liturgical cycles, the celebration of the year's festivals, the observance of fasts, the practices of asceticism and regular visitation'. It was therefore recommended that 'an effort must be made to bring into everyday life the liturgical rhythm of consecration of the time'. The problem remains," according to Bria (1980, 215), "for the Church today not only to keep its members in the traditional liturgical cycles, but to find ways to introduce new people into this rhythm."

He continues to ask how the Church, through its liturgical life, invites the world into the Lord's House and seeks the Kingdom to come, as "the actualisation of this will be the great success of the Church's mission". Here the notion of mission also comes into play. According to Tripp (1992, 571), "worship is ... in itself mission" in as much as it "challenges the surrounding society's sense of its own history."

"How does the liturgical order pass into the order of human existence?" asks Bria (1980, 215). Jennings (1988, 146) says the following in this regard: "The enactment of [what he calls] the liturgy of liberation creates a liberating praxis." It is therefore being played out as it is practised, it is being performed and dramatised. Regarding the witness of faith, Bria furthermore mentions evangelism. This reminds us of Wolterstorff's connection between liturgy, justice and evangelism (1991, 7). De Gruchy (1986b, 32) also speaks of "the integral relationship between evangelical piety, evangelism and social action", as indicated by Stott (1990, 2ff).

For Bria (1980, 216) "the re-Christianisation of Christians is an important task of the Church's evangelistic witness". But what does he mean? Simply that they should re-enter into the liturgical cycles spoken about earlier?

There is a necessity "to enlarge the space for witness by creating a new Christian milieu . . . finding room where the Christians live and work and where they can publicly exercise their witness and worship. The personal contact of the faithful with the non-

believers in the public arena is particularly relevant today," according to Bria (1980, 216). "New styles of worship and new styles of mission" therefore need to be developed. He however doesn't elaborate on precisely what he understands under this.

Elsewhere Bria (1996, 49) says "the faithful need a visible and tangible sign, a symbolic place to rediscover their identity as people of God. In this understanding a church building is not a mere human construction; it is a symbol of divine presence."

In an explanation on prayer and song in Taizé, it is mentioned that a "space" in which people can find themselves able to pray, is created at this ecumenical community in France. Once again the underlying aim is to enter together into the mystery of God's presence, whether it is through physical arrangements within the church or in the musical forms themselves. It is significant that this community finds resonance with the vast amounts of young people from all over the world that visit there annually.

"The liturgical life has to nourish the Christian life not only in its private sphere, but also in its public and political realm," continues Bria (1996, 49). He doesn't succeed, however, in elaborating on the "how" question.

Perhaps the reason for this lack of practicality is given by Serge Bulgakov, another contemporary Orthodox theologian, when he says there is a certain "relativism regarding means and methods" in the Orthodox Church, as long as there is "an absolute

and unique aim" for the coming Kingdom which is also already present in the mystery of the church (Meyendorf 2000, 35).

"Codifying and systemising practical resources regarding social or personal ethics is strange to Orthodoxy. It rather depends on free human will; every Christian stands in his (sic) conduct before the judgement of the New Testament and of the great examples of the saints". For Bria (1980, 217 - 218) "liturgy means public and collective action," it is a corporate activity, and it "is a creator of community". It is therefore "an obvious form of witness and mission".

"The involvement of the whole of man in the liturgical action presupposes that sanctification reaches not only man as an individual but his entire environment. At all times, in the culture of the various nations, the Church has succeeded in finding and adopting cultural forms, which, through their richness and variety, were able to communicate the Gospel to these people in a manner akin to their mentality and their historical traditions" (Bria 1980, 217).

In *Liturgy after the liturgy* Bria (1996, 49) makes this same point: "The gospel has to be proclaimed and taught in every generation, in its own language and symbols. It cannot be appropriated once for all by a particular culture; it has to be liberated for new connections and new praxis." Here he makes out a case for the inculturation and contextualisation of the gospel as I referred to earlier.

"New forms of worship should be developed for mobile populations, travelers, children and young people, people in industry, foreigners, refugees, non-Christians in the vicinity of our congregations - all of whom have no permanent roots. New forms of community outside existing parishes should be established in view of the different needs of these types of people," Bria says (1996, 42). "Worship needs new symbols to capture something of the mystery of God in contemporary society" (1996, 26). Once again I would have liked him to elaborate a bit more on these new forms of worship, the new forms of community and the new symbols he refers to, to which we will look now in greater detail.

4.3.2 Ritual, Symbol and Story

This brings me to a very practical theological quest for possible answers to the predicament caused by modernism. What might be a post-modern approach to the recovery of mystery? We have already seen some guidelines in the previous pages. But through this I would also like to respond to Smit's (1997, 10) appeal to "South African Christian ethicists to offer more constructive reflections on the public role of Christian worship with (specific) regard to the formation of integrity...", as mentioned earlier.

There are probably not many creative examples that have been recorded where worship quite literally has "gone public". De Gruchy (1986b, 33) cites one: "Perhaps the most public and radical expression of this connection between religious conviction and political struggle has been demonstrated at the funeral services of people who have died as a result of the struggle for liberation."

Other examples of such "public worship" are when church organisations in the black townships go out on the streets to preach publicly along with the women's wake at the grave on Easter Sunday mornings as well as the public processions on Good Friday, when especially Roman Catholics follow the stations of the cross.

Bria (1996, 21) speaks of an occasion when "the eucharist may be an open-air witness so planned that many may see it. Such a joyful celebration as this may offer fresh hope in cynical, secular societies."

Once again the notion of hope within De Gruchy's (1986, 43) cynical nihilist society, comes into play, bearing testimony of the hope that lives in us. These are all occasions where the borders between church and society become blurred. Is it for example necessary that the communion table stays fenced from non-believers, or can it really be used as a witnessing opportunity to draw people nearer? Since the threshold of the church has become too high for many people we need to reach out and new ways have to be devised to cross the borders to the public square.

This is therefore clearly a concern for evangelisation. I see this in the broadest sense as an outreach of the *Missio Dei* and the church as agent of this mission. This mission is concerned with the salvation and liberation of the whole person and meets this person where he/she is. This mission might offer the person help to interpret life in a more meaningful way.

This mission does not only have the person's conversion to a particular church or even faith in mind, but seeks to accompany people on the journey of life towards better understanding and more integration, and a meaningful interaction with reality. This is an outreach to pain, suffering and confusion, a descent "into the hell of this world, into communion with the misery", in Villa-Vicencio's words (1988, 196).

That brings me to ritual, symbol and story - such practical phenomena that might help us to address the complex issues as discussed above. Hanekom (1994, 111) admits that ritual and symbol are two media of religious communication that are often seen as traditional and without much content, but maintains that it can be applied in very meaningful ways, especially within the post-modern context. I will focus on the use of symbol, but will also shortly refer to ritual and story.

Hanekom (1995, 70 - 71) says the intentional use of symbols is disappearing from our society. Due to the individualisation and secularisation of society, the modern person is shaped by a "demythologised imagination". Once again there is talk of a "privatised spirituality" and "the private internalising of religious experience". The transcendent becomes watered down to the literal and present, as people lose the ability to think symbolically and also go about symbolically with transcendent realities.

Hanekom (1995, 32) says for the past number of years we have lived in an era of audiovisual electronic media. Babin (1991, 5) affirms this, remarking that "the

introduction of electronic media has changed the meaning of all our cultural institutions .

.."

Henri Nouwen (1990, 45) spoke of the "word pollution" or "word inflation" we experience in modern culture. Symbols, however, are simple and do not use too many words (Hanekom 1995, 54). Still they provide a complexity of deeper meanings.

A symbol expresses something mysterious which lies outside our immediate horizon of understanding (Hanekom 1995, 47 - 48). It provides much greater possibilities for understanding, also about God. It makes use of the subconscious processes and experiences of the individual.

John Baldock (1990, 9) summarises this potential of a symbol as follows: "For a symbol to remain a symbol, we must accept that what it expresses will remain a mystery(!): a mystery which can only begin to be experienced as we overcome the apparent distance which separates us from the symbol. In other words, when we transcend the outer, tangible appearance of the symbol we encounter the transcendent reality that expresses itself through it. This is what gives human beings their unique position in relation to other known life forms - the potential to perceive a transcendent reality revealing itself through the material reality of this world."

Babin (1991, 148) also underlines this quest for the recovery of mystery through the use of ritual and symbol in what he calls "the symbolic way". The Bible is full of fantasies,

poetry, parables, dreams, miracles, prophetic signs, and speaking in tongues. For a hundred years or more we have subjected these aspects to critical analysis and rational investigation. Our only questions have been scientific."

Here once more the Orthodox liturgies succeed in simultaneously addressing the emotional, intellectual and aesthetical abilities of people. The liturgy includes a variety of symbols and makes use of bodily sensation and gestures as well as the visual arts. The intention behind this was to proclaim the gospel to both the literate and the illiterate (Meyendorf 2000, 22).

According to Keifert (1992, 104) "story and ritual draw together spirit, body and psyche in ways that other modes of learning cannot. Just as through stories and rituals we give our lives order and meaning, connecting them with others, the Christian story and ritual embodies, orders and gives meaning to the Christian's life."

One such ritual and story is the Holy Communion, which "we need to learn to present as an at-home game with hospitality to the stranger" (Keifert 1992, 120), as he puts it in his peculiar language. "It too must be a public rather than a private event."

Smit and Kritzinger (2001, 12) refer to the Lord's supper, specifically in the light of the DRC's history with it, as a "liberating and empowering ritual, where we can tell our stories of suffering and survival around the Table, together with the story of the Man of

Nazareth; and then receive from his hands – and from one another's hands – the signs of his living presence”.

Field (1998, 46), when referring to identity formation, says “the process of definition usually entails the creation of narratives that select and interpret data according to a specific set of symbols and values. These narratives express the entity's interpretation of its past and thus explicate and constitute its continuity through the process of change”.

Field (1998, 46) mentions a fourth dimension in which identities can be analysed - “the interpretative narratives they use to describe themselves, their context and relationship with their context. Our structures, experiences and context are only available as they are interpreted in these narratives. Communities have traditions, usually including a narrative, which define values, mission and boundaries. These explicate our personal and communal identity through transformation over time”.

According to Field (1998, 49) “the white identity narrative has (for example) been discredited”. This helps to understand the sense of disorientation many whites experience. There is a need, therefore, for a radical re-thinking of the “white story”.

Neutjens (Koers 2000, 334) says we need to become sensitive towards mystery once more, mystery being the secret of things. While rationalism promised transparency and clarity, a failure to appreciate mystery, understood in the above sense, comes down to a

serious reduction of reality. He doesn't want to juxtapose the sacred against the profane. The absolute is, according to Neutjens, not the antithesis of the relative, but the mysterious precondition for the existence thereof. The absolute is the emancipation of, the slackening of. It is the other of the relative, the secret of the relative, the mystery thereof. While an enslavement to the profane is the great poverty of Modernism, it has to be married to the sacred.

Referring to a "ritual liturgy" he (Koers 2000, 336) says, as there are two types of words -logos and myth – there are two types of deeds - ergon and rite. Ergon is a productive deed, while rite is non-productive, without being ineffective. He doesn't want to see rite only in a ceremonial function.

Rite does with deeds what myth does with words. Rites are the privileged deeds that put us into contact with the sacred and are therefore much more powerful than words. The liturgy should, says Neutjens (Koers 2000, 337), become more deed than word service. The time to break the superior power of the logos and the ergon has come!

Frederick Herzog's critique of David Kelsey's book on theological education, is also applicable: "By exclusive focus on the *Wissenschaft* of Berlin and the *paideia* of Athens, the poverty of Lima was forgotten. 'Lima reminds us that "seeing" God is never direct, always indirect. *Paideia* (Athens) and *Wissenschaft* (Berlin) have to be brought under the scrutiny of the vast encampment of the poor who are banging, as it were, at the doors of our theological schools" (Herzog 1994, 275 – 276).

This surely enters a point to be noted also in the debate regarding the use of symbol, ritual and story in addressing post-modern young people, attempting to engage them in credible social witness. It furthermore connects with the point made earlier about the poor being an important theological category, especially in the African and South African contexts.

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5. Towards a credible praxis

Hope: Something we are in serious need of in South Africa today as we go into the third millennium after Christ.

Credibility: Also something we are longing for as people entering the post-modern age: something genuine; something real.

Spirituality: Something for which there is a renewed search in the post-modern time.

Mystery: Perhaps something we should reclaim after our loss of innocence due to the disillusionment modernism brought. Our naive faith in our own ability, after the death of God, to "save the world" through rationality, science and technology, has been cut down to size. Mystery is that objective reality beyond ourselves, which we cannot bring under words, but represents something of the transcendent "Ganz Ander". Perhaps mystery will help us once more to realize how little we know, that we are not the owners of truth, and that we can't put God into words and therefore bring Him under control so easily.

Poverty: The major challenge facing us in our time, specifically as South Africans and Africans. But it may just offer us the opportunity to be credible witnesses of the hope that is within us.

I have indicated that ritual, symbol and story may be media of communication to be utilised in our search for the recovery of mystery. They may offer very practical ways of

keeping communication and interpretation open-ended, but also allow for the possibility of nurturing people by providing security through their familiarity, while also having transformative power regarding ethical issues.

A lot of practicalities of course need to be worked out in much greater detail, which will also be the test for this study: Can it be translated into liturgical acts of worship that will really engage people to interact with their social reality?

I have tried to show how I see the inauthenticity of worship when it fails to make this crucial link with what I termed the public square. De Gruchy called this "false piety", and although it might be problematic to make this the criterion for the genuineness of faith, as was the critique brought in against Wolterstorff (Olson, Cunningham & Fishburn 1991, 22 - 32), I have tried to indicate that faith that estranges you from reality, is definitely not "good faith". Faith is supposed to rather *call* us to reality than to estrange us from it. Otherwise it does become Marx's (1959, 263) "pie in the sky when you die; opium to the masses", totally other worldly with no implications for the immediate context.

I have therefore tried to focus on the roots of inauthentic faith and proved De Gruchy's (1986, 43) point of finding many of its origins in the rampant individualism, secularism and rationalism since the eighteenth century Enlightenment.

I furthermore attempted to indicate to what extent Nazism in Europe and apartheid in South Africa can be seen as remnants of this modernism, especially as far as its value-free mentality carried the later privatisation of piety found in apartheid. (I agree with Jonker (1988, 154) that it was the Second Enlightenment, coupled with the influence of the Second World War, that effected the formation of the policy of apartheid.)

Keifert (1992, 47) draws a direct link between the two world wars in Europe and the accompanying disillusionment with Western culture. In South Africa the same disillusionment with Christianity and especially Christian-nationalism *should* be omnipresent, as "our inhumanity towards others has killed God". In traditional African society, however, you find a radically different picture as the split between religion and worldview has not occurred to the same extent.

While Everett (1999, 83) blames Protestant Christians, especially those in the Calvinist tradition with its overemphasis on a theology of the Word, of robbing "us of the symbolic resources, not only to communicate more fully, but to dramatise the underlying patterns of divine right order that can legitimate and critique our public life," I found help from Bria's (1980 & 1996) Orthodox perspective of "the liturgy after the liturgy".

After all, I wanted to put on the table again the need for a concern for evangelisation in worship, a concern for the people outside the walls of the church, Villa-Vicencio's (1988, 190) "church of the streets" perhaps. But he says (1988, 189) "it is the poor who must

evangelise the church". It is amongst the poor "the hope of Christian renewal is found" (Villa-Vicencio 1988, 190).

We have much to gain by also including them, by reaching out, by opening up, by allowing in, and by resisting the renewed threat of a privatised piety in our time and context. I therefore seek to connect a post-modernist worldview as found among young white post DRC Afrikaners, with the challenging reality of poverty in our country, developing the concept of a secular spirituality. This form of "new spirituality" obviously needs to be contextual and socially conscious.

I conclude with two images that are to me very striking. One I saw in a movie: a priest carrying the cross through the streets in a procession enacting the stations of the cross on Good Friday. Almost super-imposed over this image in a fragmented way were the sins of this priest vividly portrayed.

The second image is of the St. Lambertus chapel, a plaque proclaiming that it is the oldest church in Heverlee, Liege. It is a small chapel made of rough stone, but what is unique about it is that one can quite literally look straight through it. It has big glass windows on all sides, simple wooden benches inside with a single candle standing on the communion table, a white cloth draped over it. A picture of serene simplicity with the leaves in summer coming in from the trees outside.

Modernism's transparency? The radiant light of the candle shining out through the big glass windows, causing the outside to be inside, calling to the warmth, welcoming the stranger, the poor, inviting them in to communion. This signifies the liturgy and the public square coming together – that is the essence, and it stays with you for ever.

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